United Nations S/PV.4809

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4809th meeting

Monday, 18 August 2003, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Wehbe	(Syrian Arab Republic)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Tidjani
	Chile	Mr. Maquieira
	China	Mr. Cheng Jingye
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Germany	Mr. Trautwein
	Guinea	Mr. Sow
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Spain	Mr. Arias
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Letter dated 14 August 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Serbia and Montenegro to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/815)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

03-46798 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Letter dated 14 August 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Serbia and Montenegro to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/815)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Serbia and Montenegro, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Nebojsa Covic, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia and President of the Coordination Centre for Kosovo and Metohija.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Covic (Serbia and Montenegro) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in response to the request contained in a letter dated 14 August 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Serbia and Montenegro to the United Nations, document S/2003/815.

I now give the floor to Mr. Nebojsa Covic, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia and President of the Coordination Centre for Kosovo and Metohija.

Mr. Covic (Serbia and Montenegro) (*spoke in Serbian; interpretation provided by the delegation*): I would like to thank the Security Council for responding positively to our initiative and for convening today's Council meeting on Kosovo and Metohija.

We are gathered here today because of the hideous murder and wounding of innocent children swimming in a river near their homes in Kosovo and Metohija. The dead were killed only because they were Serbs, and in order to send a message to all Serbs now living in Kosovo and Metohija that they must leave and that there is no chance for reconciliation and the sort of multi-ethnic society that Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and all of us foresee.

That massacre is by no means unique. Since peacekeepers arrived in Kosovo and Metohija following the bombing campaign of 1999, there have been 6,013 attacks against Serbs and their cultural heritage and property. One thousand and twenty-one Serbs have been killed in those attacks. Fifty-two sacred Christian relics have been destroyed in those attacks, including 10 monasteries and churches dating from the fourteenth century. Fifty-five other Orthodox pl: es of worship have been damaged or desecrated.

We in Serbia are determined to cooperate with the international community, not only in Kosovo and Metohija but also in the region as a whole. In southern Serbia, for example, we have jointly build a model of pacification and reconciliation. From the time I was entrusted with the post of President of the Coordination Centre for Kosovo and Metohija, we have tried hard to cooperate with the international community and these institutions in the province, in a spirit of partnership and mutual confidence.

Through the most recent escalation of terrorism — the wounding and murder of children — in addition to the daily intimidation and persecution of the remaining Serbs in the province, Albanian extremists and terrorists are sending a message to the new Special Representative of the Secretary- General: every single decision he makes that does not meet their expectations will result in fresh violence and in the destabilization of the situation in Kosovo and Metohija.

Nevertheless, this brutal murder cannot but make us all wonder whether this massive effort by the international community will work, and if it can work. Are the forces of evil and of nationalism just too strong to be overcome? I appreciate the appointment by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of a special prosecutor to bring the perpetrators to justice. We will do all we can to help him. At the same time,

we all must accept that crimes such as this one are not unique. They are part of a pattern of activity by a determined minority of the Albanian population, which seeks to drive all Serbs out from Kosovo and Metohija, and, of course, discourage any refugees and internally displaced persons from returning, in order to bring the ethnic cleansing of the province to completion.

Is this an overstatement? I do not think so. Albanians who fled Kosovo and Metohija before Milosevic's regime returned to their homes in Kosovo and Metohija in a flash, rescued and assisted by the international community. The whole process was completed in just a few days. Serbs who fled Kosovo and Metohija have been advised not to return in groups but individually, due to reasons of security — or, to be more accurate — reasons of insecurity. At its current pace, the process of the return of Serbs and other non-Albanians to the province will take over 100 years.

Albanians, who suffered terribly under Milosevic's regime and who could be our key interlocutors, are watching in silence the brutal retaliations being carried out by their extremists compatriots.

I strongly believe that not all Albanians approve of this brutality and savageness. I base this belief on the tragic fate of those Albanian leaders who paid with their own lives for their disapproval of such crimes. It is therefore clear to me why the majority of Albanians have remained silent and why only a few Albanians, mainly politicians, have faint-heartedly condemned these crimes, while at the same time recalling Serbian crimes of the past.

UNMIK and KFOR have not done as much as they could have under these distorted circumstances. I am trying to understand the inertia of the representatives of the international community. I can understand it, but I cannot forgive it.

An UNMIK police officer was recently assassinated, and numerous brutal attacks have been carried out targeting international peacekeepers. If one reads carefully between the lines, one can discern that the following message is being sent to the officers of the international mission: "Think hard before you do anything. We are watching you. Any of you can be killed." Thus the staff of the United Nations Mission and all officers and personnel that are part of the international troops in Kosovo and Metohija have become hostages of Albanian extremism and terrorism.

This disturbing outcome might have been avoided had the international community, immediately upon termination of the armed conflict in Kosovo and Metohija and of the bombing campaign against Yugoslavia, applied the same standards in condemning Serbian and Albanian crimes. So far, with a single exception, only Serb perpetrators have been brought before the judges of The Hague Tribunal. Albanian assassins have thus been silently amnestied and become untouchable; they have been made into national heroes.

I believe that it is high time for the international community to look back and to evaluate the results of its own actions. We all must recognize, without any prejudice or fear, that the actions of Albanian extremist and terrorist groups represent the main threat to the stabilization of Kosovo and Metohija and to the region as a whole.

Is the international community committed to justice and fairness at any cost? Is it truly determined to succeed in Kosovo and Metohija?

The United Nations Mission, headed by Mr. Harri Holkeri, must now either accomplish what his predecessors have failed to achieve or acknowledge its defeat. In this difficult endeavour, Mr. Holkeri can count on our full support and assistance.

If we want to succeed, we must take vigorous and decisive measures that will lead to the fulfilment of the agreed objectives: the full and consistent implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), major progress in the return of internally displaced persons, and security and freedom of movement for all ethnic communities.

Despite the commitment shown thus far by Belgrade and the Government of the Republic of Serbia with regard to the establishment of a functional multi-ethnic society in Kosovo and Metohija, we are legitimately concerned that Albanian extremists and terrorists will use all available means to prevent the fulfilment of these endeavours. Serbia has carried out all of the measures to which it has committed itself in order to bring the process of stabilization in Kosovo and Metohija to completion.

The following urgent steps need to be taken to normalize the situation in Kosovo and Metohija.

First, the international Mission must send a clear message regarding its key objectives by implementing

fully resolution 1244 (1999) and by building a multi-ethnic and tolerant community with a solid economic foundation and functioning provisional democratic institutions.

Second, the international Mission has to ensure that the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999) is equitable vis-à-vis all parties and all ethnic groups, and that it does not favour one party or one ethnic group to the detriment of another.

Third, the international security forces, if they are not expanded, must at least be kept at the current level. For purposes of prevention, their presence must have greater visibility and be better targeted. They must be reorganized in order more effectively to address the problem of Albanian terrorist groups that are supported by organized crime.

Fourth, KFOR and UNMIK must ensure, from the side of the province, the full protection of the administrative line between central Serbia and Kosovo and Metohija, in full cooperation with the army and police of Serbia and Montenegro.

Fifth, international law enforcement officials must take the lead and be more efficient in investigating ethnically motivated crimes and in bringing their perpetrators to justice.

Sixth, UNMIK and KFOR should provide for the full protection of witnesses, so that they can testify in court against persons indicted for criminal acts and in connection with organized crime. Citizens must be encouraged to testify against criminals without fear or ethnic bias.

Seventh, the thorough and energetic disarmament of all citizens of Kosovo and Metohija must be carried out.

Eighth, it is necessary to ensure that all countries take the same approach to the Albanian National Army (ANA), an organization which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has proclaimed to be a terrorist organization. The ANA is variously defined as a liberation organization and as a terrorist organization. This could be very dangerous. It must be placed on the list of terrorist organizations, and international standards in the fight against terrorism must fully be applied to it.

Ninth, in the light of the crimes committed by individual members of the Kosovo Protection Corps, a thorough investigation must be carried out, leading to its abolishment. Time and again, its key members are implicated in crimes such as the bombing of the railroad bridge near Zvecan and assisting armed insurrection in Macedonia. Their very existence shows a certain hypocrisy: sorrow for the death of innocent Serbs, but unwillingness to tackle some of the root causes of the crimes. So long as that organization exists, true reconciliation will not be possible.

Tenth, perpetrators of war crimes must be indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and extradited to the Hague, regardless of their present positions.

Eleventh, in tackling security challenges in the province, such as organized crime, terrorism and so on, the security forces in Kosovo and Metohija must cooperate more closely with the security forces in the region, and with the security forces of Serbia and Montenegro in particular.

Twelfth, Albanian political leaders must be urged to implement their formal support for returns, the democratization of society, the rule of law and inter-ethnic reconciliation by providing all necessary assistance to all citizens in Kosovo and Metohija, regardless of their ethnicity.

Thirteenth, adequate measures must be taken against all officials of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government — regardless of their ethnicity — who do not provide full and public support for the aforementioned measures.

And, fourteenth, officials of the international presence in Kosovo and Metohija who refrain from carrying out the aforementioned measures in the fight against inter-ethnic violence, terrorism and organized crime must be held liable for their actions and be adequately reprimanded.

For all the proposed measures and standards, it is necessary to develop a clear plan of set and measurable tasks and responsibilities, specifying those in charge of their implementation. Similarly, it is necessary to set precise time frames, follow through on their realization and objectively assess the results accomplished.

If the international community fails to eradicate the instability in a powerful and surgical manner and if the measures it undertakes are weak and insignificant, it will be responsible before history for a resurrection of fascism in one part of Europe and the creation of a

monstrous mono-ethnic Albanian para-State in the territory that is legally recognized as part of Serbia — that is, Serbia and Montenegro — by United Nations documents. That would be to validate an act of violence by means of an act of violence.

Let me bring this statement to closure by admitting that hope in me has not died. Otherwise, I certainly would have taken the floor today as the former President of the Coordination Centre for Kosovo and Metohija. I profoundly regret that my hope cannot bring the children assassinated in Gorazdevac to life, nor can it comfort the crippled ones. However, there is one thing it can certainly do: it can keep the door of dialogue open for a bit longer.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): I want to thank Deputy Prime Minister Covic for travelling to New York to address the Council. It was good to see him here again. I wish it were under better circumstances.

My authorities have condemned in the strongest terms the attack on and the murder of the young Kosovars on 13 August. It was a horrible crime. Our spokesman called it an atrocity. We would like to extend our deepest condolences to the families. We welcome the fact that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) responded quickly and has launched an investigation into the crime. That investigation is going on now, and we should not draw conclusions about who is responsible until it is complete and until those who are responsible have been brought to justice.

We also note the statements of Kosovo Albanian leaders, including President Rugova and Prime Minister Rexhepi, deploring the criminal events. We also note and welcome statements by leaders of Serbia and Montenegro calling for a responsible reaction to the events, such as the statement made by Defence Minister Tadic, that Serbia and Montenegro will address all problems in a rational way and will remain committed to the peace process.

What we need to see is resolve and commitment to pursuing that process. Those violent acts, which should be punished, are damaging to the future of all Kosovars, and the perpetrators must be brought to justice. We are confident that UNMIK will do everything possible to see that is done.

However, the best homage that we can pay the victims of that violence is to redouble efforts to create the conditions for a multi-ethnic Kosovo and for the full implementation of resolution 1244 (1999). That is an effort in which the new Special Representative, Mr. Holkeri, is now fully engaged, and in which he has my Government's very firm and determined support.

Mr. Trautwein (Germany): We deeply deplore and condemn the ruthless killing of children in Kosovo on 13 August. We extend our sincere condolences to the families. The perpetrators of the attack have not yet been identified. Independent of their background, this is another attack in a progression of violent incidents that have taken place in Kosovo over the past weeks. We have seen attacks against institutions, public buildings and vehicles. We have seen revenge for the sentences against four former members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). And now we are faced with an attack against children. The police officer of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) who was shot in the northern part of Kosovo two weeks ago and the Kosovo Serb children seem to have been targeted deliberately. Today, Kosovo Albanians were attacked when passing through a Serbian village near Pristina. While many of those attacks might have individual motives, together they result in creating an atmosphere of lawlessness and of intimidation. They poison the relations between the ethnic groups and can damage relations with the international presence in Kosovo.

If the perpetrators' aim is to obstruct reconciliation, refugee returns or the envisaged direct dialogue or if they believe they can force the international community into a premature status discussion, they must know that this is totally unacceptable and that they will not succeed.

We welcome the statements by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo condemning the violence and urge all their representatives to exert their influence on public opinion and to speak out for the acceptance of the rule of law. No one is above the law. UNMIK, the Kosovo Force and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia will ensure that the perpetrators who committed the attacks and murders of the past weeks, as well as those who committed crimes during the time of armed conflict, will be brought to just.

Concerning the future status of Kosovo, the parties have to understand that no unilateral act can change the status of Kosovo as laid down in Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). The fact that for the time being there is no common ground between the parties on the future status of Kosovo is one more reason why the international community must insist on the policy of standards before status. There can be no debate of the status issue before the benchmarks are met.

One of the benchmarks is the initiation of a direct dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade on practical matters of common concern. This must not be confused with the dialogue on the status question. This direct dialogue must start immediately. The present security situation, as well as the current internal debate about the new Serbian Constitution, should not be taken as a pretext by Kosovar politicians to escape from their responsibility for a peaceful and stable Kosovo. We urge them to concentrate on the next steps.

I would like to conclude by expressing my Government's full support for the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Harri Holkeri, in the challenges that lie ahead.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank you, Sir, for having convened this meeting of the Security Council, which offers us the opportunity to speak our minds about the atrocious acts recently committed in Kosovo.

I should also like to welcome the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Covic. I only regret that his reason for coming here was the assassination of two teenagers and the serious injury of four others. Bulgaria categorically condemns the heinous acts of 13 August in the village of Gorazdevac, near Pec. I take this opportunity to convey the condolences of Bulgaria and the Bulgarian people to the bereaved families, particularly those of Ivan Jovovic and Pantelija Dakic.

This horrendous act, following the murder of a police officer of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) barely more than a week earlier, clearly seeks to undermine the efforts of all international and local actors to enable Kosovars to return to their normal lives. Bulgaria believes that the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo should not only categorically condemn the violence, but also help the local police and UNMIK to identify as quickly as possible the perpetrators of these crimes and assist the organs of justice in their work. The cooperation of the Kosovo Provisional Institutions is, we believe, a true test of their ability to shoulder greater responsibility in managing the region and in the transfer of authority.

Bulgaria has followed with growing concern such acts of inter-ethnic violence and intolerance, which merely further delay reconciliation among the Kosovar communities and the return of refugees to their home towns. It is very important that the international community, and UNMIK in particular, clearly inform all of the local political forces and the inhabitants of Kosovo, irrespective of their ethnic origin or their place in society, that such acts are absolutely intolerable to the international community.

Bulgaria also condemns the destruction of religious monuments referred to earlier by Deputy Prime Minister Covic. We believe that the destruction of Orthodox churches and monasteries is totally unacceptable. The point has been made in the past that these acts must stop. We hope that UNMIK will be able to take the steps necessary to deter those who commit them.

We also believe that such acts of inter-ethnic violence in Kosovo do nothing to improve the positions of the various parties to the impending negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina. They can only impede the process. This is yet another reason why we hope that such acts will cease immediately.

In conclusion, I should like to say that the concerns I have just formulated are shared not only by Bulgaria in its capacity as a member of the Security Council, but also by all of the countries of South-East Europe. We are duty-bound to state this on behalf of all the inhabitants of South-East Europe, who will never accept inter-ethnic violence.

I should also like to offer my best wishes to the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Harri Holkeri. He has the experience and the background necessary to confront the daunting challenges he faces in Kosovo and we assure him of our full support.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Like other speakers, I would like to welcome the participation in this debate of Deputy Prime Minister Covic of the Republic of Serbia. We have heard his statement with great interest.

I would also wish to add my voice to express the profound sadness of the Government and people of Pakistan at the recent brutal murders in Gorazdevac. As it has done in the past, Pakistan unreservedly and unequivocally condemns all ethnically motivated crimes in Kosovo. We have consistently called for an end to impunity and we will continue to urge that all those who have committed such crimes in Kosovo over the past four years be brought to justice.

The establishment of the rule of law and security is the most essential element in almost all post-conflict transitional administration situations. Kosovo is no exception in this regard. We have repeatedly stated that, without security, there can be no freedom of movement, no protection of minorities, no sustainable return of refugees and no economic recovery. The rule of law is essential to progress towards justice, reconciliation and self-governance. These are the essential pillars on which the success of the Provisional Institutions and the future political stability of Kosovo depend. We hope that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), under the new and able leadership of Mr. Holkeri, will give these issues the highest priority.

We believe that something must be done urgently to put an end to such ethnically motivated crimes as have happened recently. Pakistan is fully committed to do all it can to assist UNMIK efforts in that regard. We have committed over 100 police personnel to UNMIK, including a special police unit. Our Minister for the Interior visited Kosovo last week and reiterated Pakistan's resolve and commitment to the maintenance of peace and security in Kosovo. We stand by that commitment.

It should be recalled that in Kosovo, a province of 2 million people, there is a protection force of 17,000 troops led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, in addition to the presence of over 4,000 UNMIK police personnel deployed there.

I believe that the Security Council, in considering such emergency situations, must make an overall cost-benefit analysis of where and how forces should be deployed. Let us not forget that the Council waited for weeks to be able to deploy a few thousand forces in Liberia, where hundreds of people were dying every day. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo we waited three years to be able to deploy 10,800 troops. And the most classic example is that in Jammu and Kashmir, an area populated by 10 million people, only 45 United Nations observers were able to be deployed to contain the situation in what has been recently called the most dangerous place on earth.

My delegation is of the view that the brutal murders that took place in Gorazdevac should be a wake-up call. Our assessment is that, although this is one in a series of incidents, it is indicative of the fact that the underlying political issues relating to Kosovo remain to be resolutely addressed and resolved. Of course, the slogan "standards before status" sounds good, and we hope that it will be fulfilled. But all the parties concerned bear a responsibility to reach an agreement and to resolve their differences in Kosovo. Nationalist rhetoric — on all sides — does not help. Hate must be discarded as a political currency in Kosovo, as elsewhere.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia. His trip here is a reminder of the extraordinary gravity of the act about which the Council is meeting. I wish to express to him my delegation's condolences.

The murder of the Kosovar children is a horrible, despicable and almost unimaginable crime. A terrorist act of this kind — because that is what it is, a horrendous terrorist act — is completely unjustifiable. It is totally condemnable, and the international community must, and does, consider it as such. Its perpetrators must be brought to justice to answer for this terrible act. The international community demands it.

Some years ago, the international community entered the area to stop what was considered ethnic cleansing. Today it would be incomprehensible and totally unjust if it were to remain idle, judging that what is now at issue are isolated acts that should not be exaggerated. Those "isolated acts" are links in a policy of harassment, intimidation and unspeakable violence against a particular community. Those not-so-isolated acts can — and in this case do — constitute terrorism. As we have said, terrorism has no justification or colour. Terrorism is terrorism.

I hope and wish that the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo will successfully carry out its inquiries and that those responsible will be brought to justice. I also trust that the political leaders will be able to maintain calm and will sincerely seek to achieve the objectives of resolution 1284 (1999): a

tolerant multi-ethnic community in which dialogue and democracy are the rule, not the exception.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): It is very good to have Mr. Covic with us today. I would like to pay tribute initially to the work he has done in southern Serbia and in working with Kosovo in the past.

I think that we have to recognize that a series of violent incidents have been occurring over the past month and longer. We must condemn the attack at Gorazdevac, the killing of the Serb fisherman on 11 August and, indeed, all the acts of violence and extremism. Every effort must be made to track down and bring to justice those responsible.

The United Kingdom, too, would like to offer its condolences to the families of those who have died.

We are very glad that the new Special Representative, Mr. Holkeri, has taken up the initiative to set up an inquiry, and we wish him every success as he takes on his mission.

I welcome the prompt action by the Kosovo Force (KFOR), which deployed 300 men as a strengthened and visible presence. It is vital that all Kosovo citizens should be able to feel safe and secure. Minority communities need and are entitled to credible, guaranteed and full protection.

Having listened to Mr. Covic, I would, however, like to reject any sense of inertia by the international community. I think that charge is unfounded and unfair. We welcome the condemnation of the attacks by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, the Kosovo Assembly and the President. Although trust between the two communities is at a particularly low level, isolated acts of extremism must not be allowed to polarize Kosovo society any further. We welcome the statement of the Serbian Prime Minister, Mr. Zivkovic, encouraging Kosovo Serbs to stay in Kosovo. But the rash of inter-ethnic incidents shows only too clearly the potential for localized violence to spread. So we urge all parties to show restraint. The extremists must be defeated and cannot be allowed to undermine Kosovo's future.

We support the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in its clamp down on terrorist activity in Kosovo. The United Kingdom supports the reform and the development of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) as a civilian emergency organization. We are clear too that further action will and should be taken against any members of the KPC who are involved in terrorism. But the United Kingdom does not share the view that the time has come to wrap up the KPC, because it fulfils a useful function.

Let us be clear that the attack on terrorism and extremism is without favour. The United Kingdom has always emphasized that the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) must prosecute those responsible for serious crimes, without discrimination, and must bring to justice all those involved.

I share with Mr. Covic the wish that we should all bring perpetrators of war crimes indicted by ICTY and ensure their extradition to The Hague. That applies equally to those indicted who may happen to be living in Serbia today.

The Thessaloniki Summit announced the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue on technical issues, and it is important for that dialogue to continue. But let us face it: that dialogue is not helped by a background, a barrage of positions on Kosovo, with rounds of accusation and counter-accusation between Belgrade and Pristina. Public pre-positioning of this sort is only likely to fuel violence. Those in responsible positions must ensure that their rhetoric matches the gravity of the situation.

The discussions now envisaged between Belgrade and Pristina are not to be confused with the final status negotiations set out in resolution 1244 (1999). Like Germany, the United Kingdom strongly supports "standards before status". While we welcome what is being achieved on standards, we must all acknowledge how much still needs to be done. Our goal is a stable, peaceful and multi-ethnic Kosovo that will reduce its dependence upon the international community while moving towards prosperity.

The international community has made clear its rejection of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. The conflict in Kosovo in 1999 was not intended to produce a mono-ethnic Kosovo. The goals for Kosovo are the same as the goals for the countries of the region. Normal European democratic standards must prevail. The road to Europe cannot be built on terrorism and extremism.

Mr. Covic asked — rhetorically, I hope — whether the international community was committed to

justice and determined to succeed in Kosovo. The answer is self-evident. The commitment today, which has already been alluded to by the Pakistani Ambassador, in terms of the number of KFOR troops, the involvement of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the part played by the European Union — all these reflect a determination within the United Nations umbrella to produce the outcome we seek.

Progress in Kosovo, in Serbia and Montenegro and in the region will be driven by Europeanization and must advance Europeanization. There can be no violent or unilateral attempts to dictate final status. At this stage, the parties should be prepared to tackle technical issues in a constructive, flexible manner, showing a willingness to listen and to argue in a rational manner. This is now key, particularly given the escalated tension. We must engender goodwill, show good faith and be transparent. That entails, in part, concrete, credible and guaranteed full protection, in law and in practice, for minority communities.

The right of refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes must be accepted in theory and in practice. Political norms and human rights must be developed in Kosovo on a par with the best European standards. In the view of the United Kingdom, only then can Kosovo move forward in a stable, peaceful manner, developing coexistence on its territory and better relations with its neighbours.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): Mr. President, I thank you on behalf of the Angolan delegation for convening this meeting on the situation in Kosovo. We welcome the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia to this meeting of the Security Council, and we took good note of the programme of action that he formulated in his statement.

My delegation continues to follow closely the developments in Kosovo, and on various occasions in Security Council meetings we have expressed our comprehensive views on the situation.

In today's meeting we would like to emphasize the following. We join previous speakers in expressing our great concern for the recent security incidents in Kosovo. My delegation strongly condemns the recent killing and wounding of young Kosovo Serbs — a stupid and gratuitous crime. The perpetrators must be brought, as soon as possible, to the dock. We convey our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims. My delegation views those horrific crimes as a serious setback for the United Nations efforts to foster multi-ethnicity in Kosovo and create conditions for the return and re-integration of the Kosovo Serb minority.

We welcome the meaningful progress achieved by the political process in Kosovo and the progress at the institutional level towards the goals set in Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and the Constitutional Framework. However, the progress made at the institutional and political levels is not matched by similar progress in the security situation and inter-ethnic relations, which remain matters of great concern.

We recognize the need to deploy continued efforts to improve the security situation, particularly through the strengthening of the Kosovo police and law enforcement institutions. We also recognize the need for a determined fight against sectarian extremists and terrorist elements and against transnational organized crime, lively scourges of the region whose existence is a serious threat to the entire process of rebuilding Kosovo. We support the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and insist on the necessity of a constructive dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina that should be further expanded to political issues in order to achieve concrete results.

My delegation urges the leaders of Kosovo to show renewed commitment to the peace process and the objectives set by the international community for Kosovo. We reiterate that the policy of "standards before status" remains a consistent strategy in framing the objective of establishing a multi-ethnic and democratic society in Kosovo, an endeavour that requires permanent dialogue, patience and determination.

To conclude, we would like to extend our support to the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Kosovo, Mr. Harri Holkeri. We wish him all success in such a difficult but noble task.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation also would like to welcome the Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, Mr. Covic. I would like to thank him for the views and considerations he has conveyed to the Security Council about the most recent events in Kosovo.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to extend our support to the work being done by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to try to find and bring to justice the perpetrators of the attack of 13 August against a group of young Serbs near the village of Gorazdevac. We trust their efforts will be successful.

We strongly condemn that crime, which took the life of one young person and wounded four others. In addition, it was an attack on the very future of Kosovo and against the very principle of building a multi-ethnic society in which there is respect for the rule of law. I convey my condolences and those of my Government to the bereaved families who are suffering from these abhorrent crimes. My delegation regards those events as part of a series of incidents that includes the attack also carried out on 13 August against a Kosovar Albanian woman, as well as later incidents that clearly signal a trend that must be stopped.

My delegation would also like to condemn the killing of Major Satish Menon, a civilian police member of UNMIK, on 3 August. We wish to convey our deepest condolences to his family and to the Government of India.

The fabric of Kosovar society is still very fragile and susceptible to provocation and a chain of reprisals and counter-reprisals. We believe that the international community must pay special attention and exert the necessary influence on all spheres of authority involved so that the political leaders of both Serbia and Montenegro and the province of Kosovo make a serious and resolute effort to contribute to the establishment of an understanding that would send a very clear message to the inhabitants of Kosovo that they must reject all forms of violence, in particular ethnic violence. The rejection of violence must then lead to building a truly multi-ethnic society in which everyone can live together.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, Mr. Harri Holkeri, described as a tragedy for Kosovo the fact that violence is still claiming innocent lives four years after the end of the conflict. He also stated that the fact that violence is continuing is serving to strengthen his resolve to establish the rule of law in Kosovo to benefit all of Kosovo's inhabitants. We are pleased that that is the intention of the Special Representative, who has just gone to Kosovo to take up his duties. Mexico supports the work he is doing. We also agree with his assessment that establishing the rule of law also includes combating organized crime and terrorist and extremist activities, strengthening democratic and multi-ethnic institutions, promoting dialogue and inter-communal integration and fostering economic development, education and culture. Those activities should continue to be priorities carried out and promoted by the Mission. My delegation also believes that that work should be carried out in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999) and the Constitutional Framework.

However, we would like to emphasize that the primary responsibility for breathing life into the process of normalizing Kosovo rests with Kosovars themselves, both the Albanian majority and the minorities. Their political representatives and community leaders should actively promote the hopes of the people of Kosovo for a multi-ethnic society. The ongoing political activism of local leaders is required to establish the rule of law and to combat extremism and violence. Those leaders must also be firmly committed to strengthening democratic and multi-ethnic institutions, reconciliation and inter-communal dialogue, and the effort for the return of refugees and displaced persons under conditions that provide real security.

We believe that part of the return effort includes the Kosovo Assembly's adoption of a resolution on the subject of refugees, above all the amendment specifically including those who left Kosovo after the conflict. That sends a positive signal that we hope will be more than a symbolic gesture. Rather, we hope that it will truly help to create the political and legal commitment conducive to the ultimate establishment of a positive and enabling atmosphere for the return of refugees and displaced persons to their communities.

The efforts being made to achieve disarmament are also important, as is the need to take advantage of the amnesty recently announced by UNMIK and for people to hand over any firearms in their possession before 30 September. It is clear that the proliferation of weapons fosters violence, organized crime and terrorism.

As I indicated earlier, I would like to conclude my statement by once again emphasizing the importance of cooperation between Belgrade and

Pristina so that the process of building a multi-ethnic society can bear fruit. Before the question of Kosovo's status is resolved it is necessary not only to achieve certain standards, the rule of law and the establishment of the institutions necessary for genuinely representative political life; there must also be determined dialogue and close communication between Belgrade and Pristina conducive to establishing the necessary environment and conditions for reaching the understandings necessary to knit together the fabric of Kosovar society and to finally resolve the issue of status.

In this connection, we are concerned over the recent adoption by the Serbian Government of a document on Kosovo, which, in our view, does not help to establish a conducive atmosphere for the beginning of dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina.

We wish to make a very strong appeal to the provisional authorities in the province of Kosovo to refrain from issuing unilateral pronouncements that only exacerbate the atmosphere of confrontation and misunderstanding.

Mr. Maquieira (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, I should like to thank you for having convened this meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro. I also welcome the presence of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia and Montenegro here today, although we regret the events that have brought him to New York.

We strongly condemn the events that took place on 13 August near the village of Gorazdevac that took the lives of two children and wounded a number of others. The killing of children is utterly despicable. There can be no justification for it; it is unacceptable. Allow me to convey our condolences to the bereaved families.

This occurrence is yet another in a series of recent events in the region which the Security Council has condemned. It has also expressed its concern as to their impact on the ongoing process in Kosovo.

Every effort must be made to find those responsible for these and other atrocities, who to date have gone unpunished. The perpetrators must be brought to justice. We welcome the steps taken so far by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), and it is our hope that its efforts to find those responsible will be stepped up even further.

Any act of violence, harassment or discrimination on ethnic grounds is detrimental to the building of a multi-ethnic Kosovo and goes against the spirit of resolution 1244 (1999). The Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo have a central role to play in achieving reconciliation in Kosovo, so as to make possible the building of a multi-ethnic and democratic society that includes all inhabitants, with no exclusions.

The events that have brought us here today must serve as a catalyst for us to recommit ourselves to this process. The future of Kosovo presents a major challenge. We therefore agree with what Mr. Holkeri said on 14 August about the urgent need to strengthen the rule of law, step up the combat against organized crime and promote economic development.

We urge the parties to intensify and broaden the scope of the dialogue. In the absence of a constructive dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and between UNMIK and the Kosovo Assembly, it will be very difficult to achieve any concrete and tangible results with respect to the major challenge that is faced.

We reiterate once again our thanks for the efforts and the professionalism of UNMIK personnel, and we offer our full support to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Harri Holkeri, whom we know from his excellent work as President of the Assembly. We wish him well in his current work.

Mr. Tidjani (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to thank you, Sir, for having convened this meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Kosovo. I should like also to bid welcome to the Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, Mr. Covic, and to thank him for the statement he made earlier.

The shooting incident of 13 August that took place in the Pec region, which resulted in the death of two young Serbs and the hospitalization of several others, who were seriously wounded, was a horrendous and inadmissible act which is of great concern to my delegation. We convey sincere condolences to the bereaved families.

Our condemnation of this deadly incident is all the more resolute given that it comes shortly after the heinous murder on 3 August of Commander Satish Menon of the United Nations Interim Administration

Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) police, who was killed in cold blood while carrying out his duties in the Mitrovica area, in the north of Kosovo. We recall also the murder on 4 June of three people in the city of Obilic and the many acts of vandalism carried out on ethnic grounds. Cameroon wishes to reiterate its strong condemnation of these acts, which run counter to the process of normalization of the situation in Kosovo and to the creation of the structures of a new Kosovar society endowed with functioning democratic institutions, in a secure and prosperous framework of tolerance in which people accept each other's differences and respect one another.

On 3 July, my delegation said, in this very Chamber, that it was pleased at the important progress made in Kosovo in the political and institutional areas. Unfortunately, however, the same cannot be said of security-related issues. We fear that, if we are not careful, such unacceptable acts could form part of a strategy aimed at undermining the dialogue that the international community has tirelessly been advocating for the Kosovo parties. This would make it more difficult, if not impossible, to restore confidence in all its aspects.

The people there are more than ever in need of the presence of, and an additional impetus from, the international community, in order to help them to keep alive the hope, and make a reality, of a peaceful society — a unified society living in harmony with itself and with its environment.

The process of the return of displaced persons and of refugees — for which an appeal was launched on 2 July, to the great satisfaction of the international community — could be the principal victim of these murders, which exacerbate fear, hatred, injustice and violence. I therefore welcome the appeal made by the Deputy Prime Minister for Serbs to remain in Kosovo.

I should like to say here also that my country is committed to the principle of standards before status.

A few days ago, a delegation from my country visited Kosovo and took note of the excellent work being done there by the United Nations and by the international community as a whole. We have read the latest report of the Secretary-General on Kosovo, and we have also noted the fragility of the achievements registered in the context of the serious problems stemming from questions of identity, which pose a major obstacle to the building of a truly multi-ethnic society.

In this context, my delegation fully agrees with what Mr. Holkeri, the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, said on 13 August:

> "We cannot allow a few extremists, of whatever ethnicity, to undermine the secure and hopeful future of Kosovo that so many have worked to build here. Such incidents will only strengthen our determination to establish the rule of law for the sake of all people in Kosovo."

More than 450,000 illegal arms of all calibres are circulating today in Kosovo. This poses an ongoing threat to peace and security in the province and to the efforts of the international community, as is made clear by these recent regrettable events. It is therefore with great satisfaction that we welcomed the decision to launch a weapons amnesty programme in Kosovo from 1 to 30 September, to enable the voluntary disarmament of the people until the latter date, after which they will face legal action. My delegation urgently appeals to all sectors of Kosovo society massively to support that programme, which has opened up a new window on the highway to peace and reconciliation.

My delegation once again calls on political and administrative leaders and civil society in the province to avoid any action that could inflame emotions and thus create new obstacles to the process of building a multi-ethnic and multicultural civil society. They are all responsible for the security of all the people of Kosovo and thus have a role to play in combating that type of incident and in combating impunity. Their firm commitment is essential.

My delegation is convinced that direct dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade could defuse all kinds of declared and potential tensions or at least prevent their exacerbation. The rapprochement of the two capitals should be encouraged and continued.

The current situation in Kosovo indicates that much remains to be done if we wish to attain our goals. But it is possible, as demonstrated by the success of the civilian Kosovo Police Force, which is multi-ethnic and incorporates gender mainstreaming. The Police Force has the difficult task of enforcing the law in Kosovo and combating extremism and all other forms of crime. Initially, it is being given significant assistance from the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in

Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR). In that context, we hope that UNMIK's efforts will speedily result in the perpetrators of those recent crimes being found and brought to justice.

Only the commitment of all Kosovans to a culture of peace will restore peace in hearts and minds and make it possible to build a truly multi-ethnic and multicultural society founded on universally recognized democratic values. That is the challenge faced by Kosovans, and by the entire international community as well. The international community long ago decided to meet that challenge and is patiently and tenaciously striving to do so. Now, it is up to the people of Kosovo to prove that they are committed to that path.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Unfortunately, the participation of the Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, Mr. Covic, in today's meeting of the Security Council is due to a tragic event. Russia learned with outrage and sorrow of the horrendous crime committed on 13 August in the Pec area of Kosovo, where two people were killed and four Serb children were wounded. There is no possible justification for that incident. It deserves strong condemnation, as well as a commensurate, robust response. We hope that the guilty will be found and duly punished. We express our profound condolences to the relatives of all the victims, particularly to those who lost their children in this tragedy. There is no doubt whatsoever that this is another manifestation of terrorism. And in the context of the realities of Kosovo, it is particularly dangerous since it adds further tension to complex inter-ethnic relations. As experience has shown, such incidents, which clearly have an ethnic subtext, can trigger a chain reaction, with extremely negative consequences for the settlement in the province.

We note the expeditious steps taken by the international presence, inter alia, by the Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Mr. Holkeri, to apprehend the criminals and to bring them to justice. That incident clearly demonstrates once again the complexity of the challenges in Kosovo facing the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, primarily in maintaining — or rather, in restoring — the multi-ethnic nature of the province. That tragic episode has proven once more the validity of the policy of the international community to step up efforts to advance the peace process and to prioritize the normalization of the situation in Kosovo, primarily by ensuring equal security and the rule of law. Meeting those challenges is the duty not only of the international presence but also of Kosovo politicians, who bear some of the responsibility for the situation in the province.

Russia's position on the processes going on in the province is well known. Over the last four years, since the Security Council adopted resolution 1244 (1999), an enormous effort has been invested in the settlement, and significant progress has been made. However, despite the progress in providing for significant autonomy and self-government in Kosovo, as stipulated by resolution 1244 (1999), there are still serious unresolved problems in the province.

The main problem remains the absence of adequate security and the continuation of ethnically motivated violence. So far, those persons guilty of committing the brutal 4 June murder of a Serbian family in Obilic have not yet been identified and therefore have not been duly punished. Today, we are once again witnessing a horrendous crime whose target was children.

There are still serious difficulties in providing for the adequate representation of minorities, particularly of the Serbian minority, in the structures of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of the province. As well, there are difficulties in establishing the process for the return of refugees to the province. Like other members of the Security Council, we are convinced that unless there is a radical improvement in the situation regarding those issues, the idea of building a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo will be further stalled, which will fuel unhealthy illusions among the remaining extremist forces in the province. That would create fertile ground for the continuation of violence.

Under the leadership of Mr. Holkeri, UNMIK will have to do painstaking work fully to implement the provisions of resolution 1244 (1999) and work on the concept of "standards before status", which provides for the necessary basic democratic conditions to be put in place before a final decision is taken on the future status of Kosovo. We urge the Mission to take a more active and more consistent position on countering any manifestation of inter-ethnic intolerance, ethnic crime or the growth of radical tendencies in the province, and on establishing law and order.

Mr. Cheng Jingye (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the presence of Deputy Prime Minister Covic of the Republic of Serbia to brief the Security Council on the situation in Kosovo. I listened attentively to his statement.

The Chinese delegation was deeply shocked by the shooting incident that occurred in the Pec region on 13 August, resulting in the deaths of two Serb children and the serious injury of four others. We strongly condemn this violence and urge that efforts be made immediately to investigate the incident and to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Recently, the Kosovo region has been troubled by rampant terrorist activities and a series of violent incidents. We are deeply concerned by these developments in the situation. The tragedy of 13 August demonstrates yet again that, although it has been four years since the Security Council adopted resolution 1244 (1999), achieving peace, stability and multi-ethnic peaceful coexistence in Kosovo remains a long and arduous task.

We urge the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo to take effective measures to strengthen the establishment of the rule of law in Kosovo, to improve the security situation there and thereby to prevent such violence from reoccurring.

Resolution 1244 (1999) established the foundations for resolving the issue of Kosovo. In order to guarantee the legitimate rights and interests of all ethnic groups in Kosovo and to promote the ultimate settlement of the issue of Kosovo, it is necessary that the Government of Serbia and Montenegro and the Provisional Institutions of Kosovo undertake political dialogue as soon as possible. To that end, the international community should provide active support.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): I should like to thank you, Sir, for organizing this meeting, which gives us an opportunity to assess recent developments in Kosovo.

My delegation welcomes the presence among us of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Covic, and thanks Mr. Michael Steiner for his excellent work during his tenure. I also wish to congratulate Mr. Harri Holkeri on his appointment to lead the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and to assure him of our full support.

Our consideration of the current situation in Kosovo prompts me to offer a few comments on pending issues. The crucial issues of security and the restoration of trust among the various ethnic groups are among the challenges to be faced.

The murder early this month of an UNMIK police commander and the shooting of a group of young Serbs on 13 August near Pec, following the massacre of an entire family in Obilic last June, demonstrate the precariousness of the security situation in Kosovo. Furthermore, these tragic events emphasize the need for all communities in Kosovo to become more involved in seeking solutions to the problems of the province so as to restore lasting peace there.

My delegation offers its condolences to the bereaved families and to the Indian Government and strongly condemns these criminal actions, the perpetrators of which must be brought to justice. We support ongoing efforts to improve the judicial system and police services, which are essential to the restoration of security.

In this regard, we welcome UNMIK's decision on its programme to combat the proliferation and illicit circulation of weapons in Kosovo. We urge all the parties involved to do their utmost to ensure the success of the programme, which is scheduled to start on 1 September.

While the international community has a primary role in normalizing the situation in Kosovo, it is nonetheless true that the success of this undertaking depends above all on the will and resolve of the Kosovars themselves. They must demonstrate tolerance and mutual respect in order to transcend their differences and promote reconciliation and peace.

In the search for lasting peace, strengthening cooperation among the various communities with UNMIK and the Kosovo Force is an imperative need.

Mr. Duclos (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, in turn, to convey to Deputy Prime Minister Covic our sincere gratitude for his presence and for his statement, although we deeply regret the circumstances that have brought him to the Council.

France condemned immediately and in the strongest terms the hateful crime committed on

Wednesday 13 August against a group of Serb teenagers in the village of Gorazdevac, which claimed the lives of two of them. The following day, the Security Council held consultations on this question and the President read out a statement to the press reiterating the condemnation of all its members of this act.

We wish once again, here and in the presence of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Covic, to restate France's sympathy for the sorrow of the families. France supports the steps that were swiftly taken to apprehend the perpetrator or perpetrators of this crime and hopes that they will be arrested and brought to justice as soon as possible.

Another shooting incident involving children apparently took place on Sunday afternoon, this time without casualty. If the report is confirmed, this new outbreak of violence shall elicit the same unequivocal condemnation from us. These crimes, which are totally unjustifiable, damage the image of Kosovo within the international community. They must strengthen our resolve to move forward in establishing the rule of law in a modern, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo. The Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, which have pledged to work for inter-ethnic reconciliation, have a special responsibility in this respect.

We listened carefully to the statement made by Mr. Covic. Naturally, we agree with the objective of reducing violence. It is up to the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), together with the Kosovo Force and in consultation with local actors, to determine which new measures will be necessary to that end. Opening direct dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, if it is constructive, should also help reduce tension on the ground.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm France's full support of and confidence in the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Harri Holkeri, in the daunting mission just entrusted to him.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

At the outset, I wish to welcome Mr. Covic, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia and President of the Coordination Centre for Kosovo and Metohija. We thank him for having taken the trouble to come to New York to brief the Security Council on the most recent developments in the situation in Kosovo.

The Syrian delegation has listened very attentively to the positions and opinions put forward by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia. We have taken note, with much regret, of the events that took the lives of two young Kosovans and caused the injury of others. Syria condemns those acts and reaffirms its view that all parties must comply with the agreements reached.

We convey our sincere condolences to the bereaved families. We call for an end to such acts and violations, including the attacks to which a number of Kosovo citizens were subjected today.

Syria welcomes the measures taken by the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and the investigation by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to determine the identity of the perpetrators of the attacks and to bring them to justice.

Syria reiterates its support for UNMIK and for the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, Mr. Harri Holkeri. We wish him every success in discharging the tasks assigned to him, particularly under such circumstances.

In conclusion, allow me to reaffirm once again our conviction about the need to achieve coexistence among all citizens of Kosovo, regardless of their ethnic, racial or religious background. That should ensure peace, justice and security for all.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council. There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.